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WEBSTER CENTENNIAL.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON THE

HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE BIRTH OF

DANIEL WEBSTER,

JANUARY 18, 1882.

BY

THE REV. HENRY N. HUDSON, LL.D.

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TO THE

Marshfield Club,

OF BOSTON, AN ASSOCIATION KNIT AND HELD TOGETHER
IN MEMORY AND REVERENCE OF

DANIEL WEBSTER,

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSE IS RESPECTFULLY
INSCRIBED BY THE

AUTHOR.

CAMBRIDGE, Jan. 18, 1882.

WEBSTER CENTENNIAL.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: One hundred years ago to-day, a very quiet but vastly fruitful event took place up in New Hampshire: it was the birth of Daniel Webster. The City of Boston and the State of Massachusetts had this great man in the councils of the Nation nearly twenty-eight years; and I think I may safely say that, from his presence and services there, they have reaped more of honour and of solid benefit than from all the other men they have had in that place during the last two generations put together. Such being the case, I had hoped that Boston would remember her illustrious citizen, her peerless statesman, and make some fitting commemoration of the day. She has not seen fit to do so; and this is one reason why I have undertaken to do what I can, to manifest a becoming respect for the hundredth anniversary of Daniel Webster's birth. I fear, indeed, that Boston has not yet fully recovered from that old disease under which she turned away from her greatest and loveliest man, this too in his gray-haired age, and even "struck him with her tongue, most serpent-like, upon the very heart." In earlier days, she seems indeed to have understood and appreciated Webster pretty well; yet I was much taken, some years ago, with a remark made to me by the late Judge Redfield, that "Boston never could get water enough together to float him."

The theme I am to speak upon is one that lies very near my heart, this too both as an American and as a man; and I propose to utter my thoughts with considerable plainness and freedom. For, in truth, I have no popularity to lose, and do not care to make any; that being a thing I have no use for, nor should known what to do with, if I had it.

As Americans, we have a right to be proud, we ought to be proud, it will do us good to be proud, of Daniel Webster. He is the one imperial intellect of our nation; altogether the greatest and most catholic mind this country has produced. In fact, he is not so properly one man as a multitude of men, rather say, a multitudinous man; the varied powers, that are commonly dispersed among other men, being massed and consolidated in him. He stands second to none of our lawyers; and his arguments in the Supreme Court of the United States probably did more than those of any other one man, except Chief Justice Marshall, towards establishing the principles and the practice of our national Constitution.

But Webster is something more than our greatest man: he is one of the world's great men. Sage and venerable Harvard, on mature consideration no doubt, has spoken him for one of the seven great orators of the world. At the theatre end of her superb Memorial Hall, which has the form of a semicircular polygon, in as many gablets or niches rising above the cornice, the seven heads, of gigantic size, stand forth to public view. First, of course, is Demosthenes the Greek; second, also of course, Cicero the Roman; third, Saint John Chrysostom, an Asiatic Greek, born about the middle of the fourth century; fourth, Jaques Benigne Bossuet, the great French divine and author, contemporary with Louis the Fourteenth; fifth, William Pitt the elder, Earl of Chatham, an Englishman; sixth, Edmund Burke, an Irish-

man, probably the greatest genius of them all, though not the greatest orator; seventh, Daniel Webster. How authentic the likenesses may be, I cannot say, except in the case of Webster: here the likeness is true; and, to my sense, Webster's head is the finest of the seven, unless that of Bossuet may be set down as its peer.

In the world's volume of illustrious statesmen also, Webster's name may justly hold up its head among the highest; very few men having, in this capacity, done so much for the political order and welfare of mankind. As an author, again, he stands very near, if not in, the foremost rank of English classics; some of his speeches, like those of Burke, holding much the same relative place in what may be termed deliberative and argumentative discourse, as *Paradise Lost* holds in epic poetry, Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality* and his *Ode to Duty* in lyrical poetry, and Shakespeare's four great tragedies in the sphere of dramatic art. But what, in this regard, should make Webster especially dear and venerable to us is, that he stands unquestionably at the head of our American classics, and is perhaps the only one of our authors that will live and be studied in future times: I hope indeed that Bryant will so live also, and two or three others, but am far from sure of it. For he must be a mighty tall man, I can tell you, whose head touches the classic summit.

It seems to me that a great deal too much stress is apt to be laid nowadays, at least among us, on the matter of style: for a good style is not to be reached by making it a paramount aim: in that case the style becomes too self-conscious, thinks quite too much of itself; whereas the proper virtue of style lies in its being kept altogether subordinate to something else. And so the prime secret of a good style in writing is, that words be used purely in their representative

character, or as standing for things, and not at all for their own sake. This it is that so highly distinguishes Webster's style, — the best yet written on this continent. His language is so transparent, that in reading him one seldom thinks of it, and can hardly see it. In fact, the proper character of his style is perfect, consummate manliness; in which quality I make bold to affirm that he has no superior in the whole range of English prose authorship: even Burke's style, though richer and more varied, is hardly equal to his in this supreme quality. And Webster, in his *Autobiography*, touches the secret of this. "While in college," says he, "I delivered two or three occasional addresses, which were published. I trust they are forgotten: they were in very bad taste. I had not then learned that all true power in writing is in the idea, not in the style; an error into which the *Ars rhetorica*, as it is usually taught, might easily lead stronger heads than mine."

But Webster was not only a great lawyer, a great orator, a great statesman, a great author, a mighty discourser: he was emphatically a great man, — great in intellect, great in eloquence, great in soul, great in character, and in all the proper correspondences of greatness. Mr. Whipple, in the admirable essay prefixed to his selection of Webster's speeches, aptly and felicitously applies to him the phrase, "colossal manhood." I really do not know of any other single phrase that fits the subject so well. Those who often heard Webster in familiar conversation, if any such survive, will probably tell us they never heard any one else who approached him in that respect. On such occasions he not seldom had the Bible for his theme; and those who listened to his talk thereon could hardly choose but believe that either the Bible was inspired or else the speaker was.

But, in "the talk that man holds with week-day man," his greatness was so tempered with sweetness and amiability, and with the finer and softer graces of eloquence, that one naturally lost the sense of it. For he had no airs of superiority; would chat with the humblest as with a brother or a friend. And I have it from those who knew him long and well, that intimacy never wore off the impression of his greatness: on the contrary, none could get so near him, or stay near him so long, but that he still kept growing upon them. A test that few men indeed can stand! But he had something better than all this: he was as lovely in disposition as he was great in mind: a larger, warmer, manlier heart, a heart more alive with tenderness and all the gentle affections, was never lodged in a human breast. Of this I could give many telling and touching proofs from his private history, if time would permit. It has been worthily noted how a little child, on entering a room where Webster was seated, and looking up into his great eyes, as these grew soft and mellow and sweet at the vision, would run, instinctively, into his arms and nestle in his bosom, as if yearning to get as near as possible to that great, tender heart. So that I make no scruple of regarding Daniel Webster as the crowning illustration of our American manhood.

In the higher elements of oratory, I find, or seem to find, a close resemblance between Webster and Burke. Both are consummate masters of rhetoric; yet the rhetoric of both is generally charged to the utmost with energy of thought: no hollowness here; no "sweet smoke"; nothing of mere surface-splendour; all is as solid as marble. Many of Webster's strains in this kind have been long and often used for exercise in declamation; but this has only proved that no frequency of reading or hearing can wear the freshness and

verdure out of them. And, in the line of parliamentary eloquence, nearly every thing else produced in this country seems to me tame and flat beside Webster's; while Burke's has wellnigh spoilt for me all else in the language except Webster's.

In the common principles of all social and civil order, Burke is no doubt our best and wisest teacher. In handling the particular questions of his time, he always involves those principles, and brings them to their practical bearings, where they most "come home to the business and bosoms of men." And his pages are everywhere bright with the highest and purest political morality. Webster, also, is abundantly at home in those common principles: his giant grasp wields them with the ease and grace of habitual mastery: therewithal he is by far the ablest and clearest expounder we have of what may be termed the specialties of our American political system. So that we can hardly touch any point of our National State, but that he will approve himself at once our wisest and our pleasantest teacher. In fact, I hardly know which to commend most, his political wisdom, his ponderous logic, the perfect manliness of his style, or the high-souled enthusiasm which generally animates and tones his discourse; the latter qualities being no less useful to inspire the student with a noble patriotic ardour than the former to arm him with sound and fruitful instruction.

I am not unmindful that, in thus placing Webster alongside of Burke, I may be inviting upon him a trial something too severe. I do not indeed regard him as the peer of Burke; but it is my deliberate judgment that he comes nearer to Burke, and can better stand a fair comparison with him, than any other English-speaking statesman. In pure force of intellect, Burke *may be* something ahead of him, and is

far beyond him in strength and richness of imagination; for he was, as Johnson described him, emphatically "a constellation": on the other hand, Burke's tempestuous sensibility sometimes whirled him into exorbitancies, where Webster's cooler temperament and more balanced make-up would probably have held him firm in his propriety. And Webster, though far above imitating any man, abounds in marks of a very close and diligent study of Burke. It seems specially noteworthy, that he was thoroughly at one with Burke in an intense aversion to political metaphysics, and to those speculative abstractions which, if attempted to be carried into the practical work of government, can never do any thing but mischief.

This reminds me to say something of the distinguished Southerner who was so long associated with Webster in our national councils. — John Caldwell Calhoun was a very able man, — a man, too, of most pure and honourable character; a perfect gentleman indeed, as Webster also was. And the two men had a profound respect for each other. Webster admired the genius of Calhoun, and honoured him for his high personal worth. Many a hard pounding, indeed, they gave each other in the national Senate; but their hard poundings were always so marked with bland and good-natured dignity, that no ill feeling ever sprang up between them: each had indeed, and felt that he had, in the other a foeman worthy of his steel; and their official intercourse may be justly set down as a model of senatorial courtesy. But Calhoun, it seems to me, was rather a great political metaphysician than a statesman, in the right sense of the term. In the latter part of his life at least, he was much given to refining among political abstractions, where all sorts of impracticable theories may easily be knocked together, and as

easily knocked to pieces. Herein Webster differed from him *in toto;* and would never go along at all with the noble Southerner in those speculative intricacies where men "find no end, in wandering mazes lost." For one of his prime characteristics was a large, healthy, vigorous, unfailing common sense, which always withheld him from extremes and onesidedness, and kept him from undertaking to upset or overrule experience and fact by dint of fine-spun political theories. He was indeed a very monarch of common sense; in which respect he probably surpassed Burke. And this, I take it, comes pretty near being the sovereign element of great statesmanship. — Strange, by the way, that the thing should be called *common* sense, while in reality it is one of the most uncommon things in the world. But then, though extremely rare in possession, it is very common in recognition: in fact, nearly all men feel it, though few men have it.

Accordingly in a speech delivered on the 22d of March, 1838, Webster, after referring to certain questions wherein Calhoun had quite shifted off from his old ground, has the following: "The honourable member now takes these questions with him into the upper heights of metaphysics, into the region of those refinements and subtile arguments which he rejected with so much decision in 1817. He quits his old ground of common sense, experience, and the general understanding of the country, for a flight among theories and ethereal abstractions." I must add, that Calhoun, by his course in this respect, probably did a good deal more than any other one man in the country towards hatching and breeding the enormous mischief of our late civil war. It is said that "whom the gods would destroy they first make mad"; and I can hardly conceive a surer way of drawing

men into suicidal madness than by fascinating them with metaphysical subtilties and abstraction-mongering.

It is, then, full time that Webster should be reinstated in the place he held some thirty-five years ago in the minds and hearts of the American people. He is as great now as he was then, for time gnaws no breaches in workmanship so solid as his; and his wise counsels are as applicable and as needful in all the leading national questions of this day as they were when his great living voice was heard amongst us. We cannot afford to forget him, or to leave his eloquence and wisdom out of our mental feeding. For the same high lessons, the same sacred inspirations, are needed still; as much so, perhaps, as when his patriotic ardour and his ponderous logic knocked the brains out of Nullification and Secession in the halls of Congress. For these reasons, and sundry others, I was heartily glad when, in 1879, a choice selection of his speeches, edited, and well edited too, by Mr. Edwin Percy Whipple, of this city, was given to the public in a form much more accessible to the people generally than ever before. Surely the people of this nation cannot do a better thing for themselves and their children than to cherish the name and memory of Daniel Webster among their dearest household treasures; and this not only as the fairest outcome of American genius and manhood, but as their wisest and most attractive teacher in all that is or should be nearest their hearts as citizens of this great and free Republic.

As it is now nearly thirty years since Webster died, I may safely presume that many of you, perhaps most of you, never heard or saw him. I will therefore endeavour to give some personal description of the man. I saw him a great

many times, and heard him repeatedly; and you may be sure my eyes and ears were seldom idle or wandering when they had him in view. He was indeed incomparably the finest-looking, rather say the grandest-looking, man I ever set eyes on: I doubt whether, in personal appearance, his peer was to be found anywhere on the planet during his time; and I can well accept as authentic the remark said to have been made by some one, that Daniel Webster must be a humbug, for no man could possibly be so great as he looked to be. In stature he was of medium height, about five feet and ten or eleven inches, I should say; his form well-proportioned, robust, and vigorous; his frame close-knit and firm-set; his step resolute and fearless; his carriage erect and manly; his presence dignified and impressive in the highest degree. His complexion was dark, insomuch that he is said in his early years to have been familiarly called "black Dan"; his hair a pure raven black, till time sprinkled it with snows. I am little booked in physiology, but I should say his temperament was bilious sanguineous, as Burke's appears to have been nervous sanguineous. His features were large and strong, but finely chiselled; his neck thick and sinewy, — a fitting support for the magnificent dome poised upon it; his chin prominent just to the point where firmness stops short of obstinacy; his mouth calm and muscular; his eyes big, dark, and blazing, — in his excited moments they literally seemed two globes of fire; his forehead high, broad, projecting, and massive, — a very cathedral indeed of thought; and the whole suffused and harmonized with an air of majestic grace.

So that the predominant expression of his face and head was that of immense power, but of power held perfectly in hand, and therefore sure to know its time. Hawthorne, in

his *Marble Faun*, has an expression so fine in itself and so apposite to Webster, that ever since my first reading of the book, it has stuck to my memory in connection with him. Speaking of the celebrated bronze statue of Marcus Aurelius the Emperor, he says, "its very look is at once a command and a benediction." In his later years, Webster was often spoken of as "the godlike Daniel"; and, sure enough, the heads that I have seen of old god Jupiter do not show an ampler dome or a more commanding outlook of intellectual majesty. Doubtless it was greatly owing to this expression of innate power which radiated from him, that even in his old age, when many minds were full of devouring thoughts about him, wherever he was present in person he was like Daniel in the lions' den: the lions might indeed growl behind their teeth, but they swallowed their rage, and dared not open their mouths to bite him. — Webster was a modest man; every thing about him was unaffected, genuine; no assumption, no arrogance, no conceit: his dignity of manner, his greatness of look, were native to him; and the impression his speaking always made upon me was such that I cannot better describe it than as follows:

> With grave
> Aspect he rose, and in his rising seem'd
> A pillar of State; deep on his front engraven
> Deliberation sat, and public care:
> And princely counsel in his face did shine
> Majestic: . . . . . sage he stood,
> With Atlantean shoulders fit to bear
> The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
> Drew audience and attention still as night,
> Or Summer's noontide air.

Webster's vast power of intellect is admitted by all: but it is not so generally known that he was as sweet as he was

powerful, and nowhere more powerful than in his sweetness. When thoroughly aroused in public speech, there was indeed something terrible about him; his huge burning eye seemed to bore a man through and through: but in his social hours, when his massive brow and features were lighted up with a characteristic smile, it was like a gleam of Paradise; no person who once saw that full-souled smile of his could ever forget it. His goodly person, his gracious bearing, and his benignant courtesy made him the delight of every circle he entered: in the presence of ladies, especially, his great powers seemed to robe themselves spontaneously in beauty; and his attentions were so delicate and so respectful, that they could not but be charmed.

In the Summer of 1839, Webster, with several members of his family, made a private visit to England; and it is both pleasant and edifying to learn how he impressed the people there. Hallam, we are told, was "extremely struck by his appearance, deportment, and conversation." Carlyle pronounced him "a magnificent specimen"; adding, withal, that, "as a parliamentary Hercules, one would incline to back him at first sight against all the extant world." Mr. John Kenyon travelled with him four days. Writing, in 1853, to Mr. George Ticknor, of Boston, he says that the acquaintance thus formed "enabled me to know and to love not only the great-brained, but large-hearted, genial man; and this love I have held for him ever since, through good report and evil report; and I shall retain this love for him to the day of my own departure." Again, referring to some of Webster's playful sallies: "Fancy how delightful and how attaching I found all this genial bearing from so famous a man; so affectionate, so little of a humbug. His greatness sat so easy and calm upon him; he never had occasion to whip himself into a froth."

Before proceeding further, I must frankly admit certain drawbacks and exceptions in the character of my theme. For I have lived too long in this world to approve of every thing that any man does, or to expect any man to approve of every thing that I do. And I remember, also, the saying of a very wise author, that "the web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together: our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our faults would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues." And so, to be sure, I have never known any man or woman who seemed to me absolutely perfect, and I venture to doubt whether there be one such now in this room: I have indeed met several who thought or seemed to think themselves so; but in that case I always like to know what their neighbours think about it. At all events, Webster, like other men, certainly had his faults and imperfections; and, amidst so much that was great and noble, candour may not permit the blemishes to be passed over in silence; though I hope to keep ever in mind the saying of Burke, "He censures God, who quarrels with the imperfections of men." And even the faults which I find in Webster appear to me mainly, if not entirely, as things lying on the outside and surface of his character, not as entering into the heart and substance of it.

In the first place, then, it is thought by many, and I am apt to think myself, that Webster sometimes got too nervously anxious to be President of the United States. A great authority tells us that "ambition is the last infirmity of noble minds." Webster undoubtedly had that infirmity in a high degree. As far back as 1834, he began to be talked of for the Presidency; and from that time onward his aspirations looked, probably with increasing strength, to that office. But I do not believe, and I challenge any-

body to prove, that he ever did any thing wrong, or any thing mean, that he ever swerved a hair from his honest convictions of duty, in order to gain the office. Nor did he affect any indifference, or use any arts of concealment, about it: all was frank, open, and above-board with him; no intrigue, no playing at hide-and-seek, no political trickery, had roothold in his ambition. On this head, we may, with supreme fitness, apply to him what he himself said of Calhoun: "If he had aspirations, they were high and honourable and noble: there was nothing grovelling or low or meanly selfish, that came near the head or the heart of Mr. Calhoun."

The truth is, Webster had early and honestly identified himself with what was then known as the Whig party against what was called the Jackson party. The latter had openly put forth as its motto, "To the victors belong the spoils": but the Whig politicians soon became even more recklessly eager to act on this principle than their opponents were. Webster did not share with them at all in this passion; he set his face against it utterly: and, though they wanted his help, and gloried in his leadership, they were still dissatisfied with him because he would not "narrow his mind, and to party give up what was meant for mankind." He told the country again and again, that the spoils system, as it is called, would, if persisted in, "entirely change the character of our government." We have been hearing a great deal lately, none too much though, about the corruption and demoralization growing out of this abominable system. Well, Webster foresaw and foretold the whole evil and danger of it fifty years ago; his most emphatic reprobation of it being uttered in a speech at Worcester, on the 12th of October, 1832. But the thing was vastly popular

then, and brought immense eclat and success to the authors of it. The politicians all went for it of course, and egged it on as a grand step of progress and reform; for such men are always sure to be sailing with the wind, it being the height of their ambition to serve as weathercocks on the top of an edifice, exalted for their levity and versatility, so as to indicate each shifting of the popular gale. But Webster was quite another sort of man; a man built high and strong in moral courage: and the great trouble with him was, that he was ever stemming some headlong current of popularity, and indeed "striding so far ahead of the time as to dwarf himself by the distance." I could point out many instances where he planted himself square against the popular rush and clamour of the day. So he stood inexorably firm against the incorporation of Texas; and he did this expressly on the ground, that he never would consent to add a single foot to the area of slavery. Here, again, the thing was hugely popular: and so even Northern Freesoilers, as they were then called, went for it, and it was carried by their votes; Webster, meanwhile, solemnly forewarning them that it would one day shake the government to its foundations. And, sure enough, that one act was the seminal principle, the prolific germ, of our civil war, with all its terrible, its unspeakable retributions.

Though myself for many years among the staunchest of Whigs, yet I must now confess that the Whig party, as a whole, was a confoundedly mean party, — mean in its impotent craving for "the loaves and fishes," mean in its unblushing preference of success without merit to merit without success; false to its professions, false to its leaders, false to itself. But it has ever been the curse of democracies to be infested with greedy demagogues, that is to say, with mere politicians, — probably the meanest and most noxious ani-

mals on the planet. They will at all times eat any quantity of dirt to the people, to get the people's votes. This Webster never did, never would do. Accordingly he was in fact treated better by his political opponents than by his political associates. In 1836 the Whigs nominated Mr. Clay. This was a good nomination, and Webster sustained it heartily. Failing to elect Clay, the party then got badly smitten with the disease of "availability"; in other words, the Whig politicians were dying for the spoils. In the strength of that disease, they elected General Harrison in 1840, and General Taylor in 1848: but they failed to elect General Scott in 1852; whereupon the party died of that disease, as indeed it richly deserved to do. I have it on good authority, that, soon after the nomination of Scott, Webster, then struggling with his last sickness, said to his son Fletcher, "My son, never undertake to serve the Whig party; Sir, the Whig party cannot be served."

I say we all know that Webster aspired to the Presidency. Well, he had a right to aspire to the Presidency; he *ought* to have aspired to it; he must have been either more or less than a man, not to have so aspired: for he could hardly help seeing, what everybody else saw, that he was generally thought to be altogether the fittest man in the country for that place. And here I am minded to relate a rather apposite passage that occurred during the presidential campaign of 1852. The matter was told me by Mr. William Bates, (I think his name was William,) a prominent lawyer and an estimable gentleman, of Westfield, Massachusetts, long a personal and political friend of Webster. It so happened that they met and rode together in a car. Their talk naturally ran a good deal upon the political movements of the day. In the course of their talk, Mr. Bates said to Webster,

"Well, Mr. Webster, I have thought a great deal on the subject, and have often asked myself whether, after all, the Presidency could do any thing for you: and really, Mr. Webster, I doubt whether it could; I am inclined to think you are quite as well without it." Webster replied: "To be frank with you, Mr. Bates, the same question has occurred to me. And perhaps it is as you say; perhaps I am just as well without that office. But, Sir, it is a great office; why, Mr. Bates, it is the greatest office in the world: and I am but a man, Sir; I want it, I want it." Now, if there be any man who thinks a jot the worse of Daniel Webster for all this, I confess I would a little rather not ride in the same coach with that man.

Webster did not rise to that office, or rather the office did not rise to him: it could have added no honour to him; he would have added much honour to it. In truth, as matters then stood, he was too great for the place, or rather he was a greater man than the politicians thought it for their interest to have there. For our politicians, to be sure, like to have their pockets well filled, or their ships well ballasted, with the office-patronage of the government; and so they of course prefer to see the Presidency held by a putty-head or a dough-face; that is to say, a man whom they can work and wind and manage. Webster felt the event deeply, indeed, too deeply. And what I rather regret than censure in him is, that he did not view the result with that calmness, that philosophy, which the world had a right to expect from so great a man; that he allowed himself to be grieved and worried by the disappointment more than in reason he ought. Doubtless his grief was the deeper, because he was conscious of having served his country faithfully and well; for the sense of such injustice joined with such ingratitude cuts

to the quick: but he should have stayed his lion-hearted manhood on the fact, notorious in all ages, that politicians, in their miserable shortsightedness, will at any time sacrifice their best friends in the vain hope of gaining support from their opponents.

In the second place, Webster was something too loose in his money matters. Though second to none of our statesmen as a financier for the public, he allowed his own private finances to be much disordered; was too careless of incurring debts, not careful enough of paying them. This I reckon a greater fault than the former: in that, he only wronged himself; in this, he did wrong to others. Of course nobody can suppose he meant to keep from others their dues; but this is not quite enough. Probably the right explanation is, that he had his big head swarming with big thoughts, and so was oblivious in this point.

A little incident has come to my knowledge, which may here illustrate his character. I have been told that, on some occasion, Mr. Seaton, one of the editors of *The National Intelligencer*, called on Webster in Washington, and had a talk with him. During their interview, a beggar-man came into the room, and solicited an alms. Webster, without pausing in his talk, thrust his fingers into his vest pocket, pulled out a bill, and handed it to the man, who then went out. When the talk came to a pause, Mr. Seaton asked Webster if he knew what he had given to that beggar-man. "Beggar-man?" said Webster; "what beggar-man?" "Why," said Mr. Seaton, "the one who came in just now, while you were talking." "O, yes," said Webster, "it seems to me I do remember something about it. Well, what did I give him?" "A hundred-dollar bill," said Mr. Seaton.

Now, a man may have a right, though even that is doubt-

ful, to be oblivious of what is due in this kind from others to himself; but no one has a right to be oblivious of what is due from himself to others. True, Webster was as far as possible from being either stingy or grasping. If prodigal of his own means, he was nowise greedy of other men's. Neither did he ever use, or abuse, his place in the government to the ends of self-enrichment. Herein it may well be wished that more of our present national law-makers were guilty of his worst fault: in that case, I suspect their patriotic toils would not prove quite so remunerative as they often do. Webster, indeed, cared nothing for money, while at the same time he had "a tear for pity, and a hand open as day for melting charity"; and whatever cash he at any time had in his purse ran away as freely as water, whether in payment of debts or in relief to the needy. I am only sorry he was not more mindful to be just before being generous either to others or to himself.

But then it is to be borne in mind, that, in giving himself up to the public service, he was obliged to relinquish the greater part of a large professional income. After being twice elected to Congress in his native State, he removed from Portsmouth to Boston in 1817, where he forthwith entered upon a career of great professional distinction, and his legal practice soon rose to the amount of twenty thousand dollars a-year; which was a prodigious income for a lawyer in those times. The good people of Boston repeatedly urged him to let himself be nominated for Congress, which he repeatedly declined, chiefly on the ground that he could not afford it. At length, in 1823, they may be said to have forced the nomination upon him: he reluctantly yielded, and was elected. After serving through one Congress, he was elected again in 1825, having 4,990 votes out of 5,000.

Now our national legislators at that time were paid only eight dollars a-day, and this only during the actual session of Congress. No wonder Webster held back from such a curtailment of his means. For he was by nature free, generous, and magnificent in his dispositions. Later in life, his vast reputation, the dignity and elegance of his manners, the engaging suavity and affability of his conversation, in a word, the powerful magnetism of the man, drew a great deal of high company round him, and necessarily made his expenses large. Then too all the money in the country could not measure the worth of his services. Still it would have been better for his peace of mind, and would have saved a deal of ugly scandal, if he had kept strictly within the small returns which his great public services brought in to him.

It is but just to add that in his closing years his mind became very uneasy on this account. In the Spring of 1852, he being then in President Fillmore's cabinet, a fee of $15,000 was offered him by Goodyear & Co. to engage his services in their great india-rubber case. He wanted the fee, but was very loth to undertake the case, as it seemed to him hardly becoming for one in his position to do so. His friends, however, the President among them, strongly advised him to accept the offer: so he argued and won the case. He is said to have expressed a wish for one more such fee, as this would discharge his debts, and make him a free man.

Touching this matter, certain people are wont to speak of Webster as if no other great man had ever run into like embarrassments. Now, Charles Watson Wentworth, the celebrated Marquess of Rockingham, died in 1782, while he was Prime Minister. The day before his death, he gave special directions to have a codicil added to his will, cancelling all acknowledgments of debt due to him from his

"admirable friend, Edmund Burke." The amount of Burke's indebtedness to his lordship is not precisely known; but it is said to have been not less than £30,000. As money was then probably worth twice as much as in Webster's time, this would make a sum nearly equivalent to $300,000 in our reckoning. But Rockingham's mind was framed in such nobility of justice, that he seemed to think himself only honoured by such munificence to the transcendant statesman of his age; whose services, however, to his country had not, up to that time, come anywhere near those rendered to this nation by Webster. But both these great men were alike drawn away from living for themselves, and from work that pays, to a course of living and working for mankind, — a service that commonly has to be its own reward.

Webster's service to the country was fully commensurate with his greatness as a man. It may well be questioned, indeed, whether even Washington himself did the nation greater service than he: for without our American Union the achievement of our American independence could hardly have proved a blessing. And so I think the history shows us that, during the interval from the Revolution to the Constitution, the States were not nearly so well off as they had been under the British rule. That rule was of course imperial; and such, in substance and effect, is the rule of our national government now. And, surely, some such paramount and inclusive authority was and ever must be needful in order to keep peace between the States; otherwise it were hardly possible to prevent a chronic antagonism and bloody quarrels from springing up amongst them. There seems to be, indeed, for the American people, no middle or tenable ground between the government of our present

national Union and that state of things, at once horrible and contemptible, which we call *Mexicanism;* and, rather than the nation should become Mexicanized, it were far better that the whole land, with all the people on it, should be sunk in the depths of the Atlantic Ocean.

Be this as it may, with Webster, love of that Union, ingenerate in his nature, and cherished by his education, had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength. He was elected to the national Senate in 1827. Early in his senatorial career he saw that certain causes or forces were working deeply and silently, and therefore the more dangerously, to bring about a rupture of that Union. He also saw that, if the structure of our national State were once demolished, it could never be rebuilt. He also saw that, for preventing this, two things were needful: first, that the people needed to have their minds rightly and thoroughly informed in the nature and principles of our Constitution; second, that they needed to have their hearts inspired with a deep, earnest, heroic passion of nationality, with an ardent, self-sacrificing devotion to the Union, as it was.

Thus his eye took in the whole situation, his mighty grasp of thought surrounded the entire question. He therefore set himself, with all his powers of mind and body, to the work, and never ceased till the work was done. For more than twenty years, it was the main burden of all his thought and all his discourse. He was a great lawyer, and knew the law; he was a great orator, and could speak what he knew; he was a great statesman, with his mind thoroughly at home in the creative and controlling forces of social, civil, and political well-being: therewithal he had that indispensable element of all high statesmanship, a large, warm, tender heart: and in the strength of this combination he saw and

felt that the preservation of our national Union was the one thing needful above all others to the welfare of the American people. So, in due time, he just educated and kindled the people up to his own height, filling their minds with his thoughts, their hearts with his fervour, their mouths with his words. In doing this, he won the title of the great Expounder and the great Defender of the American Constitution, and surely no title was ever better deserved. On the 26th of January, 1830, he met the great champion of Southern Nullification in the Senate, wrestled with him, threw him, and broke every bone in his body. I think I may safely affirm that this reply to Hayne produced a greater effect than any other speech ever delivered in the world; excepting, of course, those recorded in the Bible. Speeches greater in themselves have indeed been made: Webster himself has several that are greater; and some of Burke's, I suspect, are greater than any of his; but no one of Burke's, nor any other of Webster's, came up to that in effectiveness. This was greatly owing to the peculiar circumstances of the time, and the state of the public mind. The tide of disunion sentiment was then setting in fast and strong; men's minds were becoming deeply excited and agitated with doubts and misgivings; on all hands, the worth and stability of the Union were drawn in question: Webster turned that tide completely, and it has gone on ebbing ever since: in short, that speech made, and marks, the beginning of a new era in our national life: from that time forward, other thoughts and other feelings took fast roothold in the minds and hearts of the people.

Mr. Hayne was a superb man, able, eloquent, honourable, high-souled. Not long after Webster's speech, he withdrew from the Senate, and was replaced by a much greater cham-

pion of the same cause, who, meanwhile, had resigned the office of Vice President for that very purpose. When the question came up again, Mr. Calhoun waited till most of the Senators on the other side had said the best they could for the Union; he then took the floor, and in a rapture of logic tore their arguments all to shreds, and sent them flying like straws in a tempest. Then came Webster's turn. So, on the 16th of February, 1833, he took the floor, and just drove a huge wedge of adamantine logic right through the centre of Calhoun's masterly argument, splitting it clean asunder from end to end. Nullification was now fairly pounded to a jelly, nor was it ever after able to resume the form of bone and muscle in Congress. Then and there it was that the real battles of the Union were fought and won. For the cause had to be tried in the courts of legislative reason before it could come to trial in the field of battle; nor, in all human probability, would it ever have triumphed in the latter, if its right so to triumph had not first been made good in the former: and that this right was there and thus made good, was mainly owing, under God, to the Herculean intellect, the mighty eloquence, the great soul, the generous and comprehensive wisdom of Daniel Webster.

Of course we all understand that slavery was at the bottom of this whole business. Other causes were indeed often alleged, but this was only a disguise, and probably deceived nobody. Now Webster hated slavery much, and on all proper occasions he was downright and outspoken in his aversion to it. He thought it a great moral, social, and political evil, a consuming cancer, the *immedicabile vulnus* of the social body; and he often so declared himself. He also saw, what I suppose we all see now, that there was no power in the country which could kill slavery but the national

government, and that the national government could do this only in the exercise of its military power, and in a case of actual war, — civil war; and this was a remedy which, vastly to his credit, he could not bear to think of.

I believe — I hope you all believe — that love is, in general, if not universally, a higher, better, stronger force than hate. I also hold, — do not you? — that love of that which is good is a better and stronger principle than hatred of that which is bad; though I have nothing to say against hatred of what is bad. I have said that Webster hated slavery much: he did so, his whole life proves it; but he loved the Union more, yes, a good deal more, than he hated slavery. He believed slavery to be bad; he believed the Union to be good. That love was, indeed, all through his public life, a passion with him; nay, more, it was *the* master-passion of his soul: it had penetrated every fibre of his being. To his eye, "Earth had not any thing to show more fair" than the august and beautiful fabric of our national State. That this mighty structure, this masterpiece of political architecture, should be laid in the dust, was too much for him: the very thought of it literally wrung his heart with anguish. His supreme desire was, to have the Union so strengthened, so established in the minds and hearts of the people, so bound up, so interwoven with their dearest household ties and affections, that neither slavery nor any other power should be able to prevail against it.

Now there was a considerable and a growing class of people at the North who got so possessed with an all-absorbing, all-consuming hatred of slavery, that they went to hating the Union on slavery's account: on all hands their orators were denouncing the Constitution as "a covenant with Hell"; were openly avowing the wish, nay, the purpose, of having

it exploded; and their burning words were threatening to kindle such a fire as would burn it down. Even Washington himself also, and others who had the strongest claims to gratitude and veneration as the founders and benefactors of our Republic, were daily dragged forth by them, to be roasted in the fires, or tortured on the racks of detraction and defamation; like men desecrating the sepulchres and exhuming the bones of their fathers, in order to gibbet them before the world. At the same time, there was a considerable and a growing class of people at the South, who got so possessed with an all-absorbing, all-consuming love of slavery, that they also went to hating the Union for slavery's sake, and openly embarked in a crusade for breaking it up. Though the spirit of disunion had been thrashed out of the ugly form of Nullification, still it was not dead; and it soon after reappeared in the garb of a very gentle, harmless, smiling lady named Peaceable Secession. Thus the extremists of both sections, the extreme haters of slavery at the North, and the extreme lovers of slavery at the South, were practically leagued together in a common cause, conjointly aiming to break up the Union, to demolish the fabric of our National State, at once the fortress and the temple of American freedom; though, to be sure, they were doing this from opposite motives, the former to destroy slavery, the latter to perpetuate it. Divided in their ultimate aims, they were nevertheless united in their present purpose. And the war of words between them kept waxing hotter and hotter year after year.

At length, in 1850, the thing was visibly growing to a head. Webster saw, — at least he believed, — that the South were in dead earnest, that they had worked themselves up to the full bent, and were really of a mind to do what they were

threatening, come what might. He also saw that the controversies then raging between the North and the South, unless they could be allayed, must soon culminate in secession and civil war. The South were talking of *peaceable* secession. Webster knew that secession would not, could not, be peaceable. So, in his speech on the 7th of March, fixing his big, blazing eyes full on the Southern members, he spoke these words: "Peaceable secession! Sir, your eyes and mine are never destined to see that miracle. Who is so foolish — I beg everybody's pardon — as to expect to see any such thing? There can be no such thing as a peaceable secession. Peaceable secession is an utter impossibility. Is the great Constitution under which we live, covering this whole country, is it to be thawed and melted away by secession, as the snows on the mountain melt under the influence of a vernal Sun, disappear almost unobserved, and run off? No, Sir! No, Sir! I will not state what might produce the disruption of the Union; but I see, as plainly as I see the Sun in heaven, what that disruption itself must produce: I see that it must produce war, and such a war as I will not describe, *in its twofold character*." The words *twofold character* were a hint, if they would but take it, that in such a war the beloved slavery they were fighting for would prove an ugly thorn in their side.

Now, for the prevention, or, if this might not be, for the postponement, of such an issue, Webster felt that every danger must be braved, every exertion made, every sacrifice incurred. For these reasons, he put forth his whole strength in favour of the Compromise Measures of 1850. He well knew the risk he was running; but, in his judgment, the occasion called on him, imperatively, to stand to the work. His language to a private friend was, "It seemed to me that

the country demanded the sacrifice of a human victim, and I saw no reason why I should not be the victim myself." So, in the last hope of saving his cause, he deliberately staked his all. He himself went down indeed, but the cause was saved. In all this, most assuredly, he was right, nobly right, heroically right. And his whole action at that time proved him to be as great morally as he was intellectually.

In another speech, on the 17th of July, — the last he ever made in the Senate, — he closed with the following: "For myself, I propose, Sir, to abide by the principles and the purposes which I have avowed. I shall stand by the Union, and by all who stand by it. I shall do justice to the whole country, according to the best of my ability, in all I say, and act for the good of the whole country in all I do. I mean to stand upon the Constitution. I need no other platform. The ends I aim at shall be my country's, my God's, and Truth's. I was born an American; I will live an American; I shall die an American; and I intend to perform the duties incumbent upon me in that character to the end of my career. I mean to do this with absolute disregard of personal consequences. What are personal consequences? What is the individual man, with all the good or evil that may betide him, in comparison with the good or evil which may befall a great country in a crisis like this? Let the consequences be what they may, I am careless. No man can suffer too much, and no man can fall too soon, if he suffer or if he fall in defence of the liberties and Constitution of his country." These words, I confess, have to me a very solemn and pathetic interest, as the last ever spoken by our incomparable Senator in that capacity.

The Compromise Measures were at last carried; and it is admitted by all that they could not have been carried without

Webster's powerful aid. Thus the explosion, then so imminent, was postponed. Ten years of time were thereby gained. It is not too much to say that this gaining of time saved the Union: for we may well shudder to think of what, in all probability, would have been the result, had the explosion come on in 1851, instead of 1861. At the former period, we had a divided North and a united South. During the interval, the hideous doings in Kansas took place; which so disgusted and alienated the northern people, that we then had, for the first time, the golden prospect of a divided South and a united North.

Webster's course touching the Compromise Measures drew upon him a perfect tempest of obloquy and abuse both North and South. My father-in-law, the late Mr. Henry Bright, of Northampton, a very clear-headed and just-thinking man, was in Mobile on private business at the time when Webster's speech of the 7th of March reached that city. He told me that the "fire-eaters" there were seized with such an inexpressible rage against Webster, that he really believed, if they could have got hold of him, they would have chopped him all to pieces. At the same time, and for the same cause, the extremists at the North went with equal fury to butchering his character, — a sort of butchery not very much better, perhaps, than the other. I have no language to describe the shocking bitterness and virulence with which his name was vilified and hunted down here in New England. Why, the moral and social atmosphere of Boston is still sick with the abominable venom spouted against him here by certain *liberal* preachers and lecturers. For I suppose we all know that the most illiberal and venom-mouthed men in the world are often found among those who make special professions of liberality, and greatly

pride themselves thereon; men who insist on being themselves perfectly free to think and speak their own thoughts, and on having all others perfectly free to think and speak just as they do. For we are to note that the words *liberty* and *liberality* are of kindred origin and meaning: and what is the use of our having liberty, if we be not, *ipso facto*, free to traduce and begnaw and blacken all who are so depraved as not to accept our judgment for their own? Now, for my part, I wish to be liberal even towards illiberality itself; yet must confess I sometimes find this rather difficult. The truth of the matter, as nearly as I can understand it, runs about thus: The men in question had conceived a bitter hatred of the Union; Webster had thoroughly identified himself with the Union: so they just transferred their hatred of the Union to him; for such men always take more pleasure in hating a person than a thing; and this, I suppose, partly because a person naturally has sensibilities that may be hurt, which a thing has not: they were labouring with all their might to destroy the Union; Webster had saved the Union; and now they were possessed with an intense longing to destroy him. It may almost be said indeed that they did destroy him: at least their envenomed calumnies greatly embittered his closing years, and sent him sorrowing to his grave. But they did not destroy his work: the Union was saved. In all this we have a memorable instance of what fanaticism can do, especially when actuated by a sort of philanthropic ferocity. Nor has the spirit engendered by those proceedings fully died out yet: even to this day it is hardly safe for a man to speak an honest plain word in defence of this part of Webster's life, lest popular odium should pelt him with mud or something worse.

Now, during all those years I was myself a most cordial

hater of slavery; though I never went to the extreme — God forbid! — of hating either the Union or Webster: for how hatred of these could do any thing towards pulling slavery down, was quite beyond me. Nor was I ever able to comprehend why the Abolitionists should make it an exercise of religion, as they did, to go about cursing and reviling all that was greatest and best in the work of our national fathers: it seemed to me then, as it seems to me now, an aggravated revival of that old mystery, the *odium theologicum;* that is to say, the offspring of sheer fanaticism, and a very malignant fanaticism too; the selfsame spirit that has more than once set men to cutting throats in the name of liberty and philanthropy.

As for the speech of the 7th of March, for which Webster was so bitterly, so atrociously maligned, I have read that speech a great many times, and I do not know of a single word in it that I would have otherwise than as it is. I think it every way just such a speech as should have been made at that time by a great man, who had a great Union to save, and a great civil war to avert. Nor could Webster have consistently taken any other course: he would have belied his whole record, he would have been recreant to the sovereign aim of his life, if, in that great national crisis, he had not thrown all other regards to the winds, and made the Union his paramount, nay, his exclusive concern. So, there again, though, to be sure, with his great heart quivering and bleeding at the defection of friends, and the cruel, cruel aspersions of those whom he had loved so deeply and served so devotedly, he stood firm as a rock against the surging and dashing waves of unpopularity in his own cherished home. Seeing the peril as he saw it, he must needs have braved popular clamour as he braved it, else he would have ceased

to be Daniel Webster. So that Massachusetts went back on him, or froze off from him, just at the very time when he was worthiest of her love and honour. But then we all ought to know that, in such cases, the blind or the blear-eyed many are pretty sure to denounce and defame the one who sees. When, in 1830 and 1833, Webster encountered Nullification in debate, and strangled it in the crushing anaconda folds of his logic and eloquence, he appeared great indeed, and was great; though he then had all New England and most of the entire North backing him up and cheering him on. But a great man never appears so great as when he stands true to himself and his cause, with all the world against him. And so, to my thinking, at no other time of his life did Webster's stubborn greatness of soul, his "colossal manhood," tower up in such monumental grandeur as when, in 1850, he stood true to himself, "unshaken, unseduced, unterrified," with all New England and most of the entire North banded together to pelt him off and hiss him down.

> The fineness of such metal is not found
> In Fortune's love; for then the bold and coward,
> The hard and soft, seem all affined and kin:
> But, in the wind and tempest of her frown,
> Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,
> Puffing at all, winnows the light away;
> And what hath mass and matter, by itself
> Lies rich in virtue and unmingled.

Webster had foreseen and foretold a whirlwind of civil war as the inevitable consequence of the wind which the antagonist extremists were sowing. Both parties alike laughed him to scorn; they derided his fears, they despised his warnings; could not speak of them save as themes of scoffing and ridicule; saying that they were the mere offspring of his inordinate ambition; that he had turned prophet

merely because he wanted to be President. Nor did they give over this work when the great man died: they even made his death a crime; alleging that he had died of disappointed ambition and from the effects of personal vices; just as if a man at the age of threescore-and-ten had not a right to die! Now Webster, I take it, was at least not a fool, not absolutely a fool. Nor was he so little read in the book of human nature and human life as not to know that the course he was taking could not possibly gain him any thing at the South, while it was sure to lose him much at the North. Any man with but half an eye could not fail to see that. And Webster himself had plainly declared it in a passage I have already cited. Strange, strange indeed, what absurd reasons even good men will sometimes stick upon, for thinking that a man cannot possibly differ from them in opinion, unless he have a bad heart!

So, in the instance before us, the treatment Webster received proceeded, apparently, upon the rather odd notion, that, in the political questions of the time, he was just the last man in the country who ought to be allowed to have a mind of his own. A great many people in Massachusetts, it seems, could nowise conceive on what ground, or by what right, he should presume to have a mind larger than their own State, or, at all events, larger than their own section. That his heart dared to be big enough to embrace the whole United States, and to be satisfied with nothing less, and that his moral manhood spread so wide, and stood so firm, as to be unflinchingly steadfast to the integrity of the Union, — this was, in the eye of Massachusetts, an unpardonable sin: she could not forgive it then, she has not forgiven it now. But, assuredly, Webster's great soul will sooner or later be found to have been greater than she, and will prove too

strong for her yet. For, indeed, he was not *her* man; he was emphatically the Nation's man: and, though he loved her deeply, yet he would not budge an inch from his life-long purpose as an American, to gratify her sectional narrowness, or her war-kindling philanthropy.

How he thought and felt touching this whole matter, is perhaps best shown in a speech made at Buffalo on the 22d of May, 1851. Of course he is referring to his line of action in 1850: "I am an American. I was made a whole man, and I did not mean to make myself half a one. I felt that I had a duty to perform to my country, to my own reputation; for I flattered myself that a service of forty years had given me some character, on which I had a right to repose for my justification in the performance of a duty attended with some degree of local unpopularity. I thought it was my duty to pursue this course, and I did not care what was to be the consequence. I felt it was my duty, in a very alarming crisis, to come out; to go for my country, and my whole country; and to exert any power I had, to keep that country together. I cared for nothing, I was afraid of nothing, but I meant to do my duty. Duty performed makes a man happy; duty neglected makes a man unhappy. I therefore, in the face of all discouragements and all dangers, was ready to go forth and do what I thought my country, your country, demanded of me. And, Gentlemen, allow me to say here to-day, that if the fate of John Rogers had stared me in the face, if I had seen the stake, if I had heard the faggots already crackling, by the blessing of Almighty God I would have gone on and discharged the duty which I thought my country called upon me to perform."

I think very highly of our Mr. Whittier both as a poet and as a man. I hold him to be a man of real genius, and of an

altogether honourable and loveable character. But he has one little piece that I am sorry for. It was written in 1850, and is entitled *Ichabod.* I cannot see that it has any great merit as poetry; and I see, or seem to see, in it not a little fault of uncharitableness: nay, I must go further, — the uncharity of it is simply atrocious. Now I do not believe there is or can be an honester man than Mr. Whittier; but I hold Webster to have been every whit as honest as he, and at the same time a thousandfold wiser and vastly more charitable. It is no business of mine, nor do I propose to make it my business; but, if I were an intimate friend of Mr. Whittier, I should be very earnest with him to recall and suppress that poem. It is not worthy of him. But, whether he did so or not, I should still continue to honour him all the same, notwithstanding. It is nowise likely that I shall ever give a lecture upon him; if, however, I were to do so, I am afraid I should have to note this as a greater fault in him than any I am able to find in Webster.

It is but fair to add, indeed it would be hardly fair not to add, that Mr. Whittier has lately put forth another poem, in which he makes some considerable amends for the piece of 1850. This is entitled *The Lost Occasion*, and was published in *The Atlantic Monthly* for April, 1880; not known to me, however, when the foregoing strictures were written. In his later piece, the author thinks that, if Webster had lived ten years longer, he would have been "disillusioned." Webster disillusioned! Disillusioned of what? Why, his presentiments, his predictions, all his worst forebodings, were justified, and more than justified, by the event. Was his prevision of civil war an illusion? Nay, the horrors and agonies of that war altogether outstripped the utmost that even he had strength to apprehend. Truly, one would think

that Mr. Whittier, and not Webster, was the man to be disillusioned. Potent, potent indeed must have been the spell which, in so fair a mind, those four dreadful years of civil carnage could not break!

In the earlier piece, at all events, Mr. Whittier prophesied an untrue thing, — for Webster's glory has not departed; — is it not a glorious thing to be enrolled by wise old Harvard as one of the seven great orators of the world? — in that case at least, I say, Mr. Whittier prophesied an untrue thing, — and he was believed; Webster prophesied a true thing, and he was not believed: for, indeed, "his was the wise man's ordinary lot, to prophesy to ears that would not hear." But Massachusetts had then outgrown Webster, — so far outgrown him as to prefer one Horace Mann, who was among the loudest in rancorous invective against him. So, to shame Webster into her wisdom, her honourable Legislature had a statue of the said Horace Mann set up in front of the Capitol, and there it stands now. (By the way, I wish the friends of Webster would, some Sunday night when the Moon is shining, reverently take his statue out of that enclosure, and put it in some humbler place. For, surely, Webster is not worthy to stand there in such high company; no, he is not worthy of that!) And Massachusetts has kept on growing since: why, she has grown almost to the bigness of General Butler! She has not indeed quite overtaken his stature yet; but perhaps she will ere long, for she is still growing. Yet no! I doubt whether she will ever grow big enough for him, — big enough either to swallow him or be swallowed by him; though, to be sure, he is the owner, or the tenant-in-fee, of "an unbounded stomach."

Well, when at length Webster's predictions began to come true; when Secession stood forth an actual fact, a presence

that could not be put by, the political leaders of the Northern extremists, both in and out of Congress, were utterly aghast, as indeed they well might be, at the final outcome of their doings. They had, by their incantations, raised, or helped to raise, something that looked very like the Devil; and now the one all-engrossing thought was how to get rid of it. They had not believed the South were really in earnest, and they had imputed Webster's belief of it to bad motives. But there the thing was at last; and what could be done with it? that was the question. So they put their heads together, and made a formal proposition to the Southern leaders, solemnly pledging themselves to use all their efforts to carry through such an amendment of the Constitution as would secure slavery absolutely and for ever against all interference by the general government. The Southern leaders, in the misplaced pride of their hearts, spurned away the proposition, and laughed at the makers of it. They had got their heads very high.

The extremists of both sections had at first hated Webster because they did not understand him, and had wronged him because they hated him; and now they kept on hating him because they had wronged him. He had forewarned them of a particular mischief as the sure result of the course they were taking; they had despised his counsels, and ascribed them to an evil mind: and when his forecast became a fact, instead of relenting towards him, they even hated him worse than ever; the very thought of him stung them with self-reproach; and they sought to avenge upon him the mischief they had brought upon themselves, and went to accusing him as the author of what he had foretold. So, within the last few years, I have repeatedly found men seriously holding Webster responsible for our civil war! Such is

human nature; and so, in all ages, have men been wont to recompense their greatest benefactors! But wisdom not the less, though late, is sure to be justified of her children. And so, assuredly, it will be with Webster.

At the time I am referring to, Webster's body had been in the grave nearly eight years and a half; but his spirit, though slumbering, was still alive, and would not die. His words were on the lips and in the hearts of the people from Maine to California. Mark, then, how "the whirligig of time brought in his revenges." When at length the attack on Fort Sumter rang all through the land like an omnipresent clap of thunder, then it was that Webster's spirit awoke as from the dead. This time, the South had raised a spirit, not indeed so hideous as the one I mentioned before, but a great deal more terrible. That spirit was — love of the Union. And whose spirit was that but Webster's? How gloriously it made the people of the North spring to arms! Yes, the great soul of Daniel Webster breathing and beating in them, — this it was that set them astir, impelling them to the front, and holding them to the work, till Secession was finally overwhelmed beneath a wide-sweeping torrent of blood and fire!

Now that war cost the North not less than eight hundred thousand lives and six thousand millions of money! Perhaps the demoralization engendered out of it should be rated as a still greater cost: the Nation has not got over it yet, nor will it for fifty years to come. But, in the conflict which itself had provoked, slavery fell, and great was the fall thereof. *Gloria in excelsis* for that fall! For slavery was a loathsome and execrable old nuisance; I thought so then, I think so now: and the only good thing it could possibly do was to die. I admit, indeed, that the purchase was

worth the cost; but it was a dreadful, dreadful price to pay, even for so auspicious a riddance as that!

Of course, if the extremists, those who got up the war, had foreseen what was coming, the thing would not have come; at least it would not have come when it did. Yet, surely, it was bound to come, sooner or later; it was only a question of time. But, thanks to Daniel Webster, the war was adjourned till, as the event proved, the Nation was duly prepared for it, though not so prepared but that it was deeply punished in and by it. Nor did it escape his "large discourse" that the crisis, after all, was but postponed: I have been told that in his private intercourse he expressed it as his settled conviction that such was the case. But, surely, Providence had a controlling hand in the whole matter; and Providence knows its time, as it also knows how to make a good use of the blunders of men. Now those who had no foresight of what was coming may stand acquitted of crime, though not of blundering: yet I cannot say this for their huge unbenevolence towards their best friend: ignorance may be pardoned, malice may not. But, as Webster had a forecast of the whole, he was bound on every principle of humanity and of manhood to act as he did; nay, he would have been utterly inexcusable both as a statesman and as a man, if he had acted otherwise.

But why was it that slavery had to fall? Here I may claim some right to know what I am saying, because I had ocular and auricular proof on the subject. For I was myself in the army three years, serving the cause with such poor abilities as I had. And I was perfectly satisfied from the outset, that either slavery or the Nation was bound to perish: I felt just as sure of it then as I do now. In the Summer of 1861, I was living in the city of New York. Seeing in the papers

one morning a notice of a meeting to be held in Hope Chapel for the purpose of helping on the war, I took a notion to go to it. Being there, I felt moved to make a speech. Having gained the ear of the audience, almost before I knew what I was saying, these words popped out of my mouth: "Slavery has now forced itself into a mortal duel with Uncle Sam, and one of them has got to die; and, so far as I am concerned, it shall not be Uncle Sam." At first, I was startled with the apprehension of having gone too far; but, the audience raising a shout of applause, I saw that things were all right, and so went on.

Carrying, as I did, this deep-seated conviction into the field, I longed, intensely longed, to have slavery knocked on the head. So I wanted to blaze away against it in my talks to the soldiers. Once or twice I did so, to some extent. My official superiors took me to task for this; telling me that they had nothing to do with slavery; that they were there to sustain the government; and that they could not have discord and dissension sown among the soldiers by talks on that subject. In short, they gave me a peremptory order to let it alone. Of course I obeyed, though it went somewhat against the grain with me. And the order was undoubtedly right. I was serving in the Department of the South; and my heart fairly leaped for joy when General Hunter issued his order or proclamation for emancipating the slaves in that Department. Yet I was not without serious misgivings; for it rather seemed to me that such a measure as that ought to proceed from no one but the Commander-in-Chief of the armies and navies of the United States. You are probably aware that, when the order became known to President Lincoln, he forthwith overruled and countermanded it. This I was then sorry for. But, you see, I was in too

great a hurry. Herein I was not so wise, not quite so wise, as our great and good and divinely-patient President. He, with his patience long and sorely tried by unwise and impatient men like myself, — tried quite as much perhaps in that way as in any other, — held back, and waited for the "riping of the time." In calling them unwise and impatient men like myself, I am far from meaning to compare my insignificant self generally with them; for they were, many of them, wise and good men in their degree; but, I suspect, not quite so wise and patient as our good father Abraham. But, when our President saw, — for he had a strong, clear head on his shoulders as well as a warm and tender heart in his bosom, — when he saw that the time had come, he just hurled his thunderbolt, and knocked slavery into the place where it should be. By that time the soldiers had all been taught by the discipline and logic of events, that they had got to choose between the death of slavery and the death of the Nation; that both of these could not possibly survive the struggle: and, when it came to that, they of course chose as Webster had taught and inspired them to choose.

So then, while others had been pouring out, in language hissing-hot, their intense hatred of slavery, and even of the Union for slavery's sake, Webster had been pouring out his irresistible argument and eloquence in behalf of the Union which he loved; and the love kindled by that eloquence and upheld by that argument, — this it was that really did the work. For, in truth, it so happened at that time, that the best and surest way to crush slavery was by strengthening the Union, — by arming Uncle Sam with a hand so big and so powerful, that he could just seize the bull of disunion by the horns, and wring the bull's head off. And so, when the people, both those at home and those in the field, became

thoroughly convinced, as in time they did, that either slavery or Uncle Sam had got to die, they said, Uncle Sam shall not die, and slavery shall; and the spirit which thus spoke had been kindled within them by the man who was born up in New Hampshire one hundred years ago this day. Webster, to be sure, did not intend the destruction of slavery; that was nowise the motive of his labours: but he did intend that the Union should be kept alive, and all his mighty energies were directed to this end; such being, as I must think, the special purpose for which he was providentially endowed, and given to the American people. And so the extremists, North and South, — they it was who, between them, got up our civil war; Webster had no hand in that; but he it was who, in effect, fought the battles and gained the victories of the Union: for, as the late Judge Redfield, of this city, once said to me, "the war was all fought out on Daniel Webster's lines."

Now, which do you suppose did the most towards the final result, hatred of slavery, or love of the Union? Which was the stronger principle here, hatred of that which was bad, or love of that which was good? And who did the most for the final triumph of the very cause which the Abolitionists had so much at heart, they themselves, or the man whom they so mercilessly calumniated? They endeavoured with all their might to break him down; and he just saved them from the crime, and the infamy, of breaking up our national Union: for how would they have stood before the world at this day, if that Union had perished by the fire which they were kindling? Why, they would have been an object of universal execration! a mark of abhorrence to coming time, as the philanthropic incendiaries who had destroyed the last hope of republican institutions upon Earth!

This, then, is the revenge that Webster has taken upon them, — he served their own cause far better than they did themselves. While they were warring against him, he was preparing victory for them. He did not know this, they did not know it; but he was doing right, they were doing wrong: he was acting from love, they were acting from hate: he was trying to make peace, they were trying to break peace, between the North and the South: they, to be sure, succeeded for a time, but his success was the more lasting: and, in my copy of the Bible the seventh of the Divine Beatitudes does not read "Blessed are the peace-*breakers*," nor do I think it ought to read so. And do you not believe, — do you not *know*, — that Daniel Webster really did more towards smashing up slavery than all the Abolitionists in the country put together? It need not be said that slavery was killed; that is pretty evident: but I think it may need to be said, at all events it shall be said, that Daniel Webster was the man who killed it; not, I repeat, from hatred of slavery, but from love of the Union: yes, he, he was the Hercules who slew the monster, and saved the lady! And may we not reasonably hope that the day is not far distant, when a just sense of his vast service in this behalf shall purge the moral and social atmosphere of Boston, and of Massachusetts, of the dreadful venom and virulence breathed into it more than thirty years ago?

Ladies and Gentlemen, great cause have we to thank God for the gift of Daniel Webster to this Nation, and to bless the day when he was born. I think, withal, we may rest assured that he still lives, and is not going to die. His memory will out-tongue and live down whatever has hitherto tried, or may hereafter try, to choke it off; his name will still be fresh and

fragrant in the world's regard, when all the lingual rancours which so embittered his closing years shall have died away in blank forgetfulness. He had "a voice whose sound was like the sea"; and that voice will keep swelling up and rolling on, strong, clear, and sweet, ages after the unbenevolent shriekings of his time, and of our time, shall have gone silent for ever, Nature's air refusing to propagate them; a treasure to be cherished with reverential affection so long as the American name shall have a place in the reverence and affection of mankind. For, indeed, it is already coming to be seen, as it has never been seen before, that his broad, wise statesmanship is to be the ample and refreshing shade, his character the bright and breezy Presence, in which all the members of this great and illustrious Republic may meet and sit down and feast together.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

THE speech made by Governor Long, at the dinner given by the Marshfield Club in commemoration of Webster's hundredth birth-day, is so manly, so able, so workmanlike, and so eloquent in itself, therewithal so just to the subject, and so honourable to the speaker, that I cannot well resist the temptation to transcribe it here, in a place more convenient for preservation and reference than in the newspaper columns where it appeared:

"It is but a poor tribute that even the most eloquent voice, least of all mine, can pay for Massachusetts to the memory of her greatest statesman, her mightiest intellect, and her most powerful orator. Among her sons he towers like the lonely and massive shaft on Bunker Hill, upon the base and the crest of which his name is emblazoned clearer than if chiselled deep in its granite cubes. For years he was her synonym. Among the States he sustained her at that proud height, which Winthrop and Sam. Adams gave her in the colonial and provincial days. With what matchless grandeur he defended her! With what overwhelming power he impressed her convictions upon the national life! God seems to appoint men to special work, and, that done, the very effort of its achievement exhausts them, and they rise not again to the summit of their meridian. So it was with Webster. He knows little even of written constitutions and

frames of government who does not know that they exist almost less in the letter than in the interpretation and construction of the letter. In this light it is not too much to say that the Constitution of the United States, as it existed when it carried our country through the greatest peril that ever tested it, was the crystallization of the mind of Webster as well as of its original framers. It came from them, and was only accepted by some of our own, as a compact of States, sovereign in all but certain enumerated powers delegated to a central government. He made it the crucible of a welded Union, — the charter of one great country, the United States of America. He made the States a Nation and enfolded them in its single banner. It was the overwhelming logic of his discussion, the household familiarity of his simple but irresistible statement, that gave us munition to fight the war for the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery. It was his eloquence, clear as crystal, and precipitating itself in the school-books and literature of a people, which had trained up the generation of twenty years ago to regard this Nation as one, to love its flag with a patriotism that knew no faction or section, to be loyal to the whole country, and to find in its Constitution power to suppress any hand or combination raised against it. The great rebellion of 1861 went down hardly more before the cannon of Grant and Farragut than the thunder of Webster's reply to Hayne. He knew not the extent of his own achievement. His greatest failure was, that he rose not to the height and actual stroke of his own resistless argument, and that he lacked the sublimed inspiration, the disentanglement and the courage, to let the giant he had created go upon his errand, first of force, and then, through that, of surer peace. He had put the work and the genius of more than an ordinary life-time of service

into the arching and knitting of the Union, and this he could not bear to put to the final test: his great heart was sincere in the prayer that his eyes might not behold the earthquake that would shake it to those foundations which, though he knew it not, he had made so strong that a succeeding generation saw them stand the shock as the oak withstands the storm. Men are not gods, and it needed in him that he should rise to a moral sublimity and daring as lofty as the intellectual heights above which he soared with unequalled strength. So had he been godlike.

"A great man touches the heart of the people as well as their intelligence. They not only admire, they also love him. It sometimes seems as if they sought in him some weakness of our common human nature, that they may chide him for it, forgive it, and so endear him to themselves the more. Massachusetts had her friction with the younger Adams only to lay him away with profounder honour, and to remember him devotedly as the defender of the right of petition and 'the old man eloquent.' She forgave the overweening conceit of Sumner; she revoked her unjust censure of him, and now points her youth to him in his high niche as the unsullied patriot, without fear and without reproach, who stood and spoke for equal rights, and whose last great service was to demand and enforce his country's just claims against the dishonourable trespass of the cruisers of that England he had so much admired. Massachusetts smote, too, and broke the heart of Webster, her idol, and then broke her own above his grave, and to-day writes his name highest upon her roll of statesmen. It seems disjointed to say that, with such might as his, the impression that comes from his face upon the wall, as from his silhouette upon the background of our history, is that of sadness, — the

sadness of the great deep eyes, the sadness of the lonely shore he loved, and by which he sleeps. The story of Webster from the beginning is the very pathos of romance. A minor chord runs through it like the tenderest note in a song. What eloquence of tears is in that narrative, which reveals in this giant of intellectual strength the heart, the single, loving heart of a child, and in which he describes the winter sleigh-ride up the New Hampshire hills when his father told him that, at whatever cost, he should have a college education, and he, too full to speak, while a warm glow ran all over him, laid his head upon his father's shoulder and wept!

"The greatness of Webster and his title to enduring gratitude have two illustrations. He taught the people of the United States, in the simplicity of common understanding, the principles of the Constitution and government of the country, and he wrought for them, in a style of matchless strength and beauty, the literature of statesmanship. From his lips flowed the discussion of constitutional law, of economic philosophy, of finance, of international right, of national grandeur, and of the whole range of high public themes, so clear and judicial that it was no longer discussion, but judgment. To-day, and so it will be while the Republic endures, the student and the legislator turn to the full fountain of his statement for the enunciation of these principles. What other authority is quoted or holds even the second or third place? Even his words have imbedded themselves in the common phraseology, and come to the tongue like passages from the psalms or the poets. I do not know that a sentence or a word of Sumner's repeats itself in our everyday parlance. The exquisite periods of Everett are recalled like the consummate work of some master of music,

but no note or refrain sings itself over and over again to our ears. The brilliant eloquence of Choate is like the flash of a bursting rocket, lingering upon the retina indeed after it has faded from the wings of the night, but as elusive of our grasp as spray-drops that glisten in the sun. The fiery enthusiasm of Andrew did, indeed, burn some of his heart-beats for ever into the sentiment of Massachusetts; but Webster made his language the very household words of a nation. They are the library of a people. They inspired and still inspire patriotism. They taught and still teach loyalty. They are the school-book of the citizen. They are the inwrought and accepted fibre of American politics. If the temple of our Republic shall ever fall, they will 'still live' above the ground, like those great foundation-stones in ancient ruins, which remain in lonely grandeur, unburied in the dust that springs to turf over all else, and making men wonder from what rare quarry and by what mighty force they came. To Webster, almost more than to any other man, — nay, at a distance and in the generous spirit of this occasion it is hard to discriminate among the lustrous names which now cluster at the gates of Heaven, as the golden bars mass the West at sunset, — yet to Webster especially of them all is it due that to-day, wherever a son of the United States, at home or abroad, 'beholds the gorgeous ensign of the Republic, now known and honoured throughout the Earth, still full high advanced, its arms and trophies streaming in their original lustre, not a stripe erased or polluted, not a single star obscured,' he can utter a prouder boast than *Civis Romanus sum*. For he can say, *I am an American citizen.*"

No. II.

WEBSTER AND GIDDINGS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TRANSCRIPT: The *Transcript* of the 25th instant prints a communication from Mr. F. B. Sanborn, of Concord, which has caused me not a little surprise. It contains a letter from the Hon. J. R. Giddings, formerly a representative in Congress from Ohio, to the Rev. Theodore Parker. A part of that letter is as follows:

"HALL OF REPRESENTATIVES, Jan. 29, 1853.

"MY DEAR SIR: You may recollect that, early in the session of Congress of 1847–48, the absorbing subject of the presidential candidates was much agitated. Mr. Webster had a few friends, but it became apparent that his prospect for nomination was not good. I took occasion to suggest to some of his friends that Mr. Webster might yet place himself in a most enviable position by taking ground in favour of liberty, and against the encroachments of slavery. I did this with the hope of bringing him out on that subject, as I knew that his talents and influence would do much for the advancement of our cause. Soon after this, at a party, Mr. Webster informed me that he desired to submit a question for my opinion, on which he wished me to be very frank. Accordingly, a few days afterward, the skeleton of a speech, in his handwriting, was submitted to my inspection. It took ground in favour of Northern rights and against the encroachments of slavery. I expressed approval, and, for a long time, expected its delivery in the Senate."

It will be seen that this letter was written at least four years after the session of Congress to which it refers. Surely Mr. Giddings must have overlooked or forgotten two very remarkable speeches made by Webster: one on the 1st of March, 1847, and entitled *The Mexican War;* the other on

the 23d of March, 1848, and entitled *Objects of the Mexican War*. Both speeches are given in the fifth volume of Webster's Works, Little & Brown's edition, 1851. I hope you will not find it inconvenient to print a few extracts from those speeches, in justice to all the parties concerned. In the first of them we have the following:

"At present, I should hardly have risen but to lay before the Senate the resolutions of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, adopted on Thursday last. We have a great deal of commentary and criticism on State resolutions brought here. Those of Michigan particularly have been very sharply and narrowly looked into, to see whether they really mean what they seem to mean. These resolutions of Massachusetts, I hope, are sufficiently distinct and decided. They admit of neither doubt nor cavil, even if doubt or cavil were permissible in such a case.

"What the legislature of Massachusetts thinks, it has said, and said plainly and directly. I have not, before any tribunal, tried my ingenuity at what the lawyers call a special demurrer for many years; and I never tried it here in the Senate. In the business of legislation, and especially in considering State resolutions and the proceedings of public assemblies, it is our duty, of course, to understand every thing according to the common meaning of the words used. Of all occasions, these are the last in which one should stick in the bark, or seek for loopholes, or means of escape; or, in the language of an eminent judge of former times, 'hitch and hang on pins and particles.' We must take the substance fairly, and as it is, and not hesitate about forms and phrases.

"We are in the midst of a war, not waged at home in defence of our soil, but waged a thousand miles off, and in the heart of the territories of another Government. It is not denied that this war is now prosecuted for the acquisition of territory; at least, if any deny it, others admit it, and all know it to be true. Seven or eight of the free States, comprising some of the largest, have remonstrated against the prosecution of the war for such a pur-

pose, in language suited to their meaning. These remonstrances come here with the distinct and precise object of dissuading us from the further prosecution of the war for the acquisition of territory by conquest. Before territory is actually obtained, and its future character fixed, they beseech us to give up an object so full of danger. One and all, they protest against the extension of slave territory; one and all, they regard it as the solemn duty of the Representatives of the free States to take security, in advance, that no more slave States shall be added to the Union. They demand of us this pledge, this assurance, before the purchase-money is paid, or the bargain concluded."

Then, after reading the Massachusetts resolutions, Webster went on as follows:

"The House of Representatives of Massachusetts is, I believe, the most numerous legislative body in the country. On this occasion it was not full; but among those present there was an entire unanimity. For the resolutions there were two hundred and thirty votes; against them, none. Not one man stood up to justify the war upon such grounds as those upon which it has been, from day to day, defended here. Massachusetts, without one dissenting voice, and I thank her for it, and am proud of her for it, has denounced the whole object for which our armies are now traversing the plains of Mexico, or about to plunge into the pestilence of her coasts. The people of Massachusetts are as unanimous as the members of her legislature, and so are her Representatives here. I have heard no man in the State, in public or in private life, express a different opinion. If any thing is certain, it is certain that the sentiment of the whole North is utterly opposed to the acquisition of territory, to be formed into slave-holding States, and, as such, admitted into the Union.

"But here, Sir, I cannot but pause. I am arrested by occurrences of this night, which, I confess, fill me with alarm. They are ominous, portentous. Votes which have just been passed by majorities here cannot fail to awaken public attention. Every

patriotic American, every man who wishes to preserve the Constitution, ought to ponder them well. . . .

"Mr. President, I arraign no men and no parties. I take no judgment into my own hands. But I present this simple statement of facts and consequences to the country, and ask for it, humbly but most earnestly, the serious consideration of the people. Shall we prosecute this war for the purpose of bringing on a controversy which is likely to shake the Government to its centre? . . .

"Within a year or two after Texas had achieved her independence, there were those who already spoke of its annexation to the United States. Against that project I felt it to be my duty to take an early and a decided course. Having occasion to address political friends in the city of New York in March, 1837, I expressed my sentiments as fully and as strongly as I could. From those opinions I have never swerved. From the first I saw nothing but danger to arise to the country from such annexation. . . .

"Sir, I fear we are not yet arrived at the beginning of the end. I pretend to see but little into the future, and that little affords no gratification. All I can scan is contention, strife, and agitation. Before we obtain a perfect right to conquered territory, there must be a cession. A cession can only be made by treaty. Will the North consent to a treaty bringing in territory subject to slavery? Will the South consent to a treaty bringing in territory from which slavery is excluded? Sir, the future is full of difficulties and full of dangers. We are suffering to pass the golden opportunity for securing harmony and the stability of the Constitution. We appear to me to be rushing upon perils headlong, and with our eyes wide open. But I put my trust in Providence, and in that good sense and patriotism of the people which will yet, I hope, be awakened before it is too late."

Still more emphatic, if possible, are the following passages from the speech made a little more than a year later:

"On Friday a bill passed the Senate for raising ten regiments of new troops for the further prosecution of the war against

Mexico; and we have been informed that that measure is shortly to be followed, in this branch of the legislature, by a bill to raise twenty regiments of volunteers for the same service. I was desirous of expressing my opinions against the object of these bills, against the supposed necessity which leads to their enactment, and against the general policy which they are apparently designed to promote. Circumstances personal to myself, but beyond my control, compelled me to forego, on that day, the execution of that design. . . .

"This war was waged for the object of creating new States, on the southern border of the United States, out of Mexican territory, and with such population as could be found resident thereupon. I have opposed this object. I am against all accessions of territory to form new States. And this is no matter of sentimentality, which I am to parade before mass-meetings or before my constituents at home. It is not a matter with me of declamation, or of regret, or of expressed repugnance. It is a matter of firm, unchangeable purpose. I yield nothing to the force of circumstances that have occurred, or that I can consider as likely to occur. I therefore say, Sir, that, if I were asked to-day whether, for the sake of peace, I would take a treaty for adding two new States to the Union on our southern border, I would say *No!* distinctly, No! And I wish every man in the United States to understand that to be my judgment and my purpose. . . .

"Just before the commencement of the present administration, the resolutions for the annexation of Texas were passed in Congress. Texas complied with the provisions of those resolutions, and was here, or the case was here, on the 22d day of December, 1845, for her final admission into the Union as one of the States. I took occasion then to say that I thought there must be some limit to the extent of our territories, and that I wished this country should exhibit to the world the example of a powerful republic, without greediness or hunger of empire. And I added that, while I held with as much faithfulness as any citizen of the country to all the original arrangements and compromises of the Con-

stitution under which we live, I never could, and I never should, bring myself to be in favour of the admission of any States into the Union as slave-holding States. . . .

"If you bring in new States, any State that comes in must have two Senators. She may come in with fifty or sixty thousand people, or more. You may have from a particular State more Senators than you have Representatives. Can any thing occur to disfigure and derange the form of government under which we live more signally than that? The Senate, augmented by these new Senators coming from States where there are few people, becomes an odious oligarchy. It holds power without any adequate constituency. . . .

"Sir, I hardly dare trust myself. I don't know but that I may be under some delusion. It may be the weakness of my eyes that forms this monstrous apparition. But, if I may trust myself, if I can persuade myself that I am in my right mind, then it does appear to me that we in this Senate have been and are acting, and are likely to be acting hereafter, and immediately, a part which will form the most remarkable epoch in the history of our country. I hold it to be enormous, flagrant, an outrage upon all the principles of popular republican government, and on the elementary provisions of the Constitution under which we live, and which we have sworn to support. . . .

"I think I see a course adopted which is likely to turn the Constitution of the land into a deformed monster, into a curse rather than a blessing; in fact, a frame of an unequal government, not founded on popular representation, not founded on equality, but on the grossest inequality; and I think that this process will go on, or that there is *danger* that it will go on, until this Union shall fall to pieces. I resist it, to-day and always. Whoever falters or whoever flies, I continue the contest!

"I know, Sir, that all the portents are discouraging. Would to God I could auspicate good influences! Would to God that those who think with me, and myself, could hope for stronger support! Would that we could stand where we desire to stand! I see the signs are sinister. But with few, or alone, my posi-

tion is fixed. If there were time I would gladly awaken the country. I believe the country might be awakened, although it may be too late. For myself, supported or unsupported, by the blessing of God, I shall do my duty. I see well enough all the adverse indications. But I am sustained by a deep and conscientious sense of duty; and, while supported by that feeling, and while such great interests are at stake, I defy auguries, and ask no omen but my country's cause!"

Mr. Sanborn thinks, as he well may, that the alleged dishonest change in Webster's course, about which so much has been said, was not connected with the speech he made on the 7th of March, 1850, but with a speech which he did *not* make some time in 1847 or 1848. The letter which Mr. Sanborn gives, from Mr. Sumner to Mr. Parker, is without date; but that letter evidently refers also to some speech that Webster did *not* make against the Mexican war. A part of Mr. Sumner's letter is as follows: "At the Senate I spoke with Giddings. He repeated what he had told me before, that Webster had submitted to him the brief of a speech against the Mexican war, which he never delivered." Now, whether Webster ever delivered the particular speech here referred to may be a question. But I submit that he could not well have made any fuller or stronger declarations against admitting any new slave-holding States and against all extension of slavery than we have in the forecited passages from his speeches in 1847 and 1848. Surely these passages must be enough to satisfy any candid and fair-minded man, that Webster did not then shirk the honest expression of his mind, from what Mr. Sumner was pleased to call "the paltriness of his office-seeking."

Probably the speech which Webster did not deliver, and of which a "skeleton" was shown to Mr. Giddings, was the one referred to in one of the forecited passages from the

speech of March 23, 1848: "I was desirous of expressing my opinions against the object of these bills," &c., (page 58). And is not the reason which he there assigns, for not having made that intended speech, sufficient? especially in view of the speech he made on the 23d of March, 1848? One would think that even an unbenevolent mind might be satisfied with that reason.

Now, as nearly all the South were at that time manifestly bent on conquering new territory for the sole purpose of extending slavery, Webster, in his earnest and repeated protests and warnings against such extension, certainly had a very funny way of truckling, or of selling himself, for Southern votes. And as the imputing of bad motives, save "under a compelling occasion," is not generally regarded as a very high act of virtue, therefore we are bound in charity to presume that Mr. Sumner was strictly compelled to impute bad motives in that particular case. But it seems not unlikely that his undated letter to Mr. Parker may have been written before Webster's delivery of the speech which he had been obliged to postpone. Be that as it may, Mr. Sanborn had of course a perfect right to overlook or ignore the facts belonging to the matter in hand, and then speak just as if those facts were non-existent. For it is clearly indispensable that Webster's character should somehow be put to death; and, where the end is so high and holy, it is evidently not worth the while to be at all scrupulous as to the means. Finally, in the case of Webster, *liberal* men, to be sure, must be allowed the special privilege of drawing upon their own imagination for the facts touching his action, and upon their own generous hearts, or *their* "inner consciousness," for *his* motives.

H. N. H.

CAMBRIDGE, Jan., 1882.

No. III.

At an anniversary meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-slavery Society, held in Faneuil Hall, on the 23d and 24th of January, 1850, a series of resolutions was adopted, one of which is as follows:

"*Resolved*, That, admiring the fearlessness, the fidelity to principle, and the just discernment of slavery's true nature, and its chief strongholds, manifested by the great convention of Ohio's sons and daughters, assembled in September last at Berlin, in that State, we, the members and friends of the Massachusetts Antislavery Society, assembled in Faneuil Hall, do cordially respond to their words, and say with them, With full confidence in the integrity of our purpose and the justice of our cause, we do hereby declare ourselves the enemies of the Constitution, Union, and Government of the United States, and the friends of the new Confederacy of States, where there shall be no union with slaveholders, but where there shall ever be free soil, free labour, and free men; and we proclaim it as our unalterable purpose and determination to live and labour for a dissolution of the present Union, by all lawful and just, though bloodless and pacific means, and for the formation of a new republic, that shall be such, not in name only, but in full living reality and truth. And we do hereby invite and entreat all our fellow-citizens and the friends of justice, humanity, and true liberty throughout the Northern States, to unite with us in labouring for so glorious an object."

Many pages might easily be filled with matter just like the above, all plainly demonstrating that the Abolitionists were at that time fierce disunionists, as much so as the "fire-eaters" of the South; and that the former, in common with the latter, were pushing on, with all their might, a scheme of "peaceable secession." How likely such secession was to be peaceable, was charmingly shown by our four smilingly-

peaceful years of civil war. The Abolitionists were then feeding themselves with eager hopes of a speedy disruption or "dissolution" of the Union. Those hopes were badly dashed by the passing of the Compromise Measures, which took place just when their patriotic and philanthropic fervour was at the white-heat of intensity. This abundantly explains their amiable and benevolent virulence against Webster; for "Death loves a shining mark." To be sure, they had loved Webster mightily when he opposed Nullification and Secession in South Carolina; but they hated him with inexpressible bitterness when he opposed the same thing in Massachusetts: the case was then altered completely, of course; and so their milk instantaneously somersaulted into gall!

Upon a fair and candid view of the whole matter, the upshot seems to be about this: Webster was conscientiously loyal, the Abolitionists were conscientiously disloyal, to the Union and the Constitution; he thought the Union ought to be preserved, they thought it ought to be destroyed. Conscience was of course to be respected in them; and why not as much so in him? Wisdom, also, or moderation, if they had possessed it, would have been worthy of respect in them; Webster did possess it, and in him it was worthy of respect. In other words, the Abolitionists were honest, but they were fanatics; Webster, also, was honest, and was not a fanatic: this was just the difference between them. So, too, the pro-slavery fanatics of the South were no doubt just as honest as the anti-slavery fanatics of the North: on both sides the honesty was good; the fanaticism on both sides was bad.

One word more. The Abolitionists were eager and impatient to run the risk of setting the whole Nation on fire, in order to purge off a local and long-standing nuisance,

which it was indeed unspeakably desirable to get rid of: Webster was deeply and most honourably anxious that the nuisance should be abated, as he believed it might and would be in time, without wrapping the Nation in flames. And, when the crisis came, the people of the North proved to be so far in sympathy with him, that they preferred an almost desperate civil war to the downfall of the Union. It is also to be said, in praise of the Abolitionists generally, that, when they found, as they did find, that the cause of the Union might become, and was likely to become, a mighty force for the destruction of slavery, they fell in heartily with the rest, cast off their disloyalty to the Union, turned earnest patriots, and worked nobly, none more so, in support of that cause. And it has really long seemed to me that, now that the struggle is a thing of the past, and passion has had time to cool, the old Abolitionists, above all other people in the land, frankly discarding the animosities of thirty years ago, ought to love and honour the name of Daniel Webster. Surely they owe him that reparation; and they owe it even more to themselves than to him! And I am the rather moved to say this, inasmuch as, during those long-past years, I was myself in full sympathy with their hatred of slavery.

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"In 1870 Ginn & Heath became his publishers, and brought out his 'School Shakespeare' in three volumes, containing seven plays each. In 1872 he put into two volumes the substance of his earlier volumes on 'Shakespeare's Characters,' revising, condensing, rewriting his earlier work, parts of which he had outgrown, and presenting his final opinions under the title of 'SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE, ART, AND CHARACTERS.'

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